UNITED NATIONS

A

General Assembly

Distr.
LIMITED

A/AC.109/L.1780
9 July 1992

ORIGINAL: ENGLISH

SPECIAL COMMITTEE ON THE SITUATION WITH REGARD TO THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE DECLARATION ON THE GRANTING OF INDEPENDENCE TO COLONIAL COUNTRIES AND PEOPLES

REPORT OF THE SUBCOMMITTEE ON SMALL TERRITORIES, PETITIONS, INFORMATION AND ASSISTANCE

Rapporteur: Mr. Hossein LOTFI HORMOZABADI
(Islamic Republic of Iran)

QUESTION OF DISSEMINATION OF INFORMATION ON DECOLONIZATION

CONTENTS

	Paragraphs	Page
INTRODUCTION	1 - 3	2
I. CONSULTATIONS WITH THE REPRESENTATIVE OF THE DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC INFORMATION	4 - 15	2
II. CONSULTATIONS WITH THE REPRESENTATIVE OF THE DEPARTMENT OF POLITICAL AFFAIRS	16 - 21	6
III. WEEK OF SOLIDARITY WITH THE PEOPLES OF ALL COLONIAL TERRITORIES, AS WELL AS THOSE IN SOUTH AFRICA, FIGHTING FOR FREEDOM, INDEPENDENCE AND HUMAN RIGHTS (25-29 MAY 1992)	22 - 23	7
IV. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS	24	7

92-30154 3480e (E) 150792

160792

/...

INTRODUCTION

1. In accordance with its organization of work for 1992 (A/AC.109/L.1775), adopted at its 639th meeting, on 14 April 1992, the Subcommittee on Small Territories, Petitions, Information and Assistance considered the question of dissemination of information on decolonization at its 646th, 652nd and 655th meetings, on 19 May and 9 and 30 June 1992, respectively.

2. In its consideration of the item, the Subcommittee held consultations with representatives of the Department of Public Information and of the Department of Political Affairs of the Secretariat.

3. At its 646th meeting, the Subcommittee heard a petitioner, Mr. J. A. González-González, a journalist based at United Nations Headquarters, who spoke of his experience in the dissemination of information on decolonization.

I. CONSULTATIONS WITH THE REPRESENTATIVE OF THE DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC INFORMATION

4. In his statement, the representative of the Department of Public Information said that the Department's activities, which included press coverage, publications, radio, photographs, television/videos, films, special services provided to the media, the work of the information centres, public inquiries and relations with non-governmental organizations (NGOs), covered all aspects of decolonization and related issues, including the questions of Western Sahara, Puerto Rico, the Falkland Islands (Malvinas) and the Non-Self-Governing Territories in the Caribbean region. Media coverage was provided for the International Decade for the Eradication of Colonialism (1990-2000), emphasizing the activities of the Special Committee on the Situation with regard to the Implementation of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples.

5. As part of its regular coverage of United Nations activities, the News Coverage Service of the Department of Public Information continued to report on the work of the various United Nations bodies concerned with decolonization. In 1991, the Department issued a total of 90 press releases, both in English and French, relating to the work of the Fourth Committee (Questions relating to Non-Self-Governing Territories) of the General Assembly, the Special Committee on decolonization and its former Subcommittee on Small Territories and the Subcommittee on Petitions, Information and Assistance. The press releases also covered the various seminars and symposia dealing with decolonization issues, and reproduced statements on subjects related to decolonization made by the Secretary-General, the President of the General Assembly and the Chairman of the Special Committee. The information contained in the releases was used not only by the international media, but also by NGOs, educational institutions, Governments and various organizations of the United Nations system. Within the Department, press releases were used

for the preparation of the Un Chronicle, the Yearbook of the United Nations, pamphlets and other publications, daily briefings for journalists and radio news summaries. The United Nations information centres distributed press releases on decolonization to a world-wide audience. The Department also sent cables based on the releases to the Pool of Non-Aligned News Agencies. Specific titles of some of the press releases were: "Fourth Committee Chairman says focus will be on Caribbean, Pacific Territories"; "Representative of United States Virgin Islands urges Fourth Committee to allow Non-Self-Governing Territories to participate in its work"; "Decolonization Committee continues hearing petitioners on question of Puerto Rico"; "Petitioners in Decolonization Committee focus attention on proposed plebiscite in Puerto Rico"; "Argentina, United Kingdom urged to resolve Falkland/Malvinas issue in resolution adopted by Special Committee on decolonization"; "Subcommittee on Small Territories hears petitioners on situation in Guam"; "Subcommittee on Small Territories takes up situation in Bermuda"; "Subcommittee on Small Territories begins discussion of situation in United States Virgin Islands"; "Subcommittee on Small Territories takes up question of Tokelau"; "Subcommittee on Small Territories takes up American Samoa"; "Subcommittee on Small Territories takes up question of Anguilla, Pitcairn, Cayman Islands"; and "Subcommittee on Small Territories takes up question of Montserrat, Turks and Caicos Islands".

6. The Department's Radio Section provided extensive coverage of the remaining Trust and Non-Self-Governing Territories. A total of 104 radio news magazines featured programmes on decolonization in 18 languages, including the 6 official languages of the United Nations. These programmes, aimed at enlightening the people of the Trust and Non-Self-Governing Territories about their right to self-determination, included the following: "Caribbean Echo"; "Caribbean News Round-up"; "UN Caribbean Magazine"; "Nieuwe Connecties"; "Nouveaux contacts"; "Al-Majallatu Al-Natika"; "L'Afrique à l'ONU"; "Perspective"; "Bonjour l'Afrique"; "Mwangaza wa Umoja wa Mataifa"; "One South Africa"; "N.U. em Aççao"; "Fokus Fokus Kita"; "Perspectiva Internacional"; "Bain Ul Aqwami Manzarnama"; "Huayu Zhuanti Jiemu"; "Antar Rashtriye Patrika"; "UN News Magazine"; "Chinese News"; "Afakon Alamiya"; "UN Newsbrief"; "UN In Action"; "UN Calling Asia"; "Puntos Cardinales"; "UN News" and "Naciones Unidas en Acción". The topics dealt with, inter alia, the participation of the Caribbean Non-Self-Governing Territories in the work of a working group of the United Nations Committee on decolonization; the importance of the United Nations visiting missions to Non-Self-Governing Territories, including the seven in the Caribbean; complete decolonization by the year 2000; Week of Solidarity with the Peoples of All Colonial Territories, as well as Those in South Africa Fighting for Freedom, Independence and Human Rights; a review of the activities of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations in Non-Self-Governing Territories; Virgin Islands decolonization; issues related to Puerto Rico and the Falkland Islands (Malvinas); Trusteeship Council debates on the situation in Palau; and situation of Palau in the Pacific region.

7. During the period under review, decolonization was featured in publications of the Department of Public Information. The UN Chronicle, a quarterly magazine published in the six official languages of the United Nations, carried the following articles: "Decolonization: a historic anniversary" and "Western Sahara solution appears within reach" (June 1991 issue); "Report delay for UN referendum in Western Sahara" and "The right to self-determination: a speedy exercise" (March 1992 issue). Objective: Justice -- Special Issue on Decolonization, vol. XXII, No. 2, December 1990 (DPI/1108) was distributed widely. Decolonization: The Task Ahead -- Profiles of 18 Trust and Non-Self-Governing Territories (DPI/1109), published in 1991, was given world-wide distribution. The 1991 issue of the Yearbook of the United Nations, which is currently being produced, devotes one chapter to each of the questions relating to decolonization and to the International Trusteeship System.

8. Activities on decolonization were televised and widely disseminated and made available to networks and television stations and through packages of video highlights provided to international news syndicators. An 18-minute educational video about decolonization, accompanied by a booklet, was produced in English for the series entitled "About the United Nations". The programme, for use in secondary school social studies and history courses, examines the role of the United Nations in developing the principle and practice of "self-determination" in Non-Self-Governing Territories. The question of Western Sahara was also publicized. The Department of Public Information continued to prepare and distribute television news packages to subscribers and syndicators world wide on subjects such as the questions of the Falkland Islands (Malvinas) and Puerto Rico.

9. The Audio and Visual Materials Library Unit made tapes and cassettes available to correspondents, United Nations radio producers and delegates. It also provided United Nations and outside producers with video archival material on decolonization issues in general and on Western Sahara in particular.

10. During 1991, the various units of the Department's Dissemination Division continued to provide services for the promotion, dissemination and distribution of United Nations information products dealing with the decolonization issue in general, and in particular, with the Non-Self-Governing Territories, Western Sahara, the Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands and apartheid. The Department responded to public inquiries and requests for information by distributing, as handouts or through the mail, publications, pamphlets, booklets and brochures. In 1991, displays in the Public Lobby and along the route of the guided tours included an exhibit on decolonization.

11. During the period under review, activities on decolonization carried out by the Institutional Relations and NGO Section included the screening of United Nations films and videos immediately preceding the weekly briefings for representatives of NGOs. "Namibia: Independence" and "Teaching about decolonization" were shown before an audience of 200 and 170, respectively.

The Section mailed the following information materials to each chief executive officer of the more than 1,200 NGOs associated with the Department: briefing on the thirtieth anniversary of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples, and copies of Objective: Justice - Special Issue on Decolonization and of Decolonization: The Task Ahead - Profiles of 18 Trust and Non-Self-Governing Territories. Additional copies of the above publications, as well as of "UN Focus: Let Them Speak" (DPI/1093), a flyer on the rights of indigenous peoples, were featured and distributed at the NGO Resources Centre (the Centre draws approximately 500 users each month).

12. The Executive Media Service, in addition to conducting daily press briefings, disseminated information, on request, on decolonization subjects, such as Western Sahara and East Timor. It distributed posters, pamphlets, press releases and documents to journalists and arranged for special press briefings by the Secretary-General and other senior officials of the United Nations and the specialized agencies, as well as by delegations.

13. The United Nations information centres and information services continued their task of informing the public world-wide of the activities of the Organization, including those relating to decolonization. They disseminated information provided by Headquarters to local media, NGOs, government agencies, educators and academic institutions on such subjects as the Week of Solidarity with the Peoples of All Colonial Territories, as well as Those in South Africa, Fighting for Freedom, Independence and Human Rights and the International Decade for the Eradication of Colonialism. The activities of the information centres and information services included distributing radio programmes; preparing posters and publications; mounting exhibits; screening films; holding news briefings; translating and disseminating Headquarters materials, such as background notes, press releases and documents; participating in seminars and lectures; and granting interviews. During the Week of Solidarity (20-24 May 1991), information kits containing the following documents were distributed to the press and to visitors touring the United Nations: Decolonization, a brochure containing information on the Declaration, the work of the Special Committee on decolonization and the role of the United Nations in the decolonization process; Objective: Justice - Special Issue on Decolonization; and Decolonization: The Task Ahead - Profiles of 18 Trust and Non-Self-Governing Territories.

14. As in previous years, the Department's information activities in connection with the Week of Solidarity emphasized the continuing struggle of the South African people, as well as those of colonial Territories in Africa and the Caribbean, Atlantic and Pacific regions. Those activities included the production of a special radio programme on the Week of Solidarity featuring interviews with the representatives of the Congo, Madagascar, the Syrian Arab Republic and the United States of America; distribution of a special press release covering the statement by the Chairman of the Special Committee on decolonization on the Week of Solidarity; distribution of a press kit containing a brochure entitled Decolonization, Objective: Justice - Special Issue on Decolonization, and Decolonization: The Task Ahead -

Profiles of 18 Trust and Non-Self-Governing Territories; and dissemination by the NGO Resource Centre of the above publications and documents to the non-governmental community during the Week of Solidarity. The Department aimed at providing maximum coverage of decolonization issues.

15. On 23 May 1991, the video entitled "Teaching about decolonization" was shown before an audience of 170. Observance of the Week of Solidarity provided an opportunity for the global network of United Nations information centres and United Nations information services to draw public attention to the rights of peoples in colonial Territories everywhere. Many of the Department's information centres and information services organized their own public information programmes relating to the Week. Public information activities included mounting exhibits; screening films on the struggle for freedom, independence and human rights; publishing news bulletins; producing press kits; addressing briefings; translating and disseminating press material from Headquarters; participating in seminars and lectures; and granting interviews.

II. CONSULTATIONS WITH THE REPRESENTATIVE OF THE DEPARTMENT OF POLITICAL AFFAIRS

16. In his statement before the Subcommittee, the representative of the Department of Political Affairs indicated that the dissemination of information on decolonization continued to be one of the key activities of the Department.

17. The Department was using all the means at its disposal to disseminate information: publications, radio and television. In 1991, it had endeavoured to implement the recommendations of two regional seminars held in 1990 in Vanuatu and Barbados, whereby the Department had been requested to continue its activities in the field of dissemination of information.

18. The Department had continued to cooperate with the Department of Public Information in updating and disseminating documents relating to decolonization. The Department had participated in preparing the new edition of Objective: Justice, a publication of the Department of Public Information. It had also contributed much to the compilation of Decolonization: The Task Ahead, a monograph on each of the 18 remaining Non-Self-Governing Territories. The Department's role was not only to update the above texts, but also to ensure that the information contained in the publications was accurate and precise.

19. The Department had assisted in the preparation of About the United Nations, an illustrated booklet to serve as a guide for students on decolonization issues, and had been actively involved in the production of a number of articles for the UN Chronicle. The Department's cooperation with the Department of Public Information in the dissemination of information on decolonization was a multifaceted activity which included the production of printed publications, as well as audio and video programmes.

20. The Department attached great importance to its cooperation with regional organizations involved in disseminating information on decolonization. Those organizations played a significant role in that field.

21. The representative said that the Department was currently involved in preparations for a regional seminar aimed at reviewing the special development needs of island Territories, to be held in Grenada from 17 to 19 June 1992 by the Special Committee on decolonization. That event, in which many representatives of the media had been invited to participate, would provide an excellent opportunity for the further dissemination of information in the Caribbean.

III. WEEK OF SOLIDARITY WITH THE PEOPLES OF ALL COLONIAL TERRITORIES, AS WELL AS THOSE IN SOUTH AFRICA, FIGHTING FOR FREEDOM, INDEPENDENCE AND HUMAN RIGHTS (25-29 MAY 1992)

22. In accordance with its organization of work for 1992, adopted at its 639th meeting, on 14 April 1992, the Subcommittee considered the question of the Week of Solidarity at its 646th and 652nd meetings, on 19 May and 9 June 1992, respectively.

23. In its consideration of the item, the Subcommittee hald consultations with the representative of the Department of Public Information at its 646th meeting, and with the representative of the Department of Political Affairs at its 652nd meeting.

IV. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

24. Having concluded its examination of the item, the Subcommittee submits the following conclusions and recommendations for consideration and approval by the Special Committee:

(1) The Special Committee reiterates the importance of effecting the widest possible dissemination of accurate information on decolonization to further the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations and the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples (General Assembly resolution 1514 (XV) of 14 December 1960) and to mobilize world public opinion in support of the peoples of colonial Territories in their efforts to achieve self-determination, freedom and independence.

(2) The Special Committee reiterates the great importance it attaches to the work of the Department of Political Affairs. The Committee urges the Department to continue to discharge its mandate, taking into account all the Territories under the consideration of the Committee.

(3) While noting the active participation of the Department of Public Information in the work of the Committee and its efforts to produce and disseminate information on decolonization, to monitor the responses received from the United Nations information centres and to report thereon, the Special Committee requests the Department:

(a) To continue to intensify, through all the means at its disposal, its work of publicity in the field of decolonization, basing its activities in this regard on the Charter; the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples; the Plan of Action for the Full Implementation of the Declaration, contained in the annex to General Assembly resolution 35/118 of 11 December 1980; the items on the agenda of the Special Committee; and all relevant resolutions and decisions of the General Assembly and of other organs of the United Nations active in the field of decolonization;

(b) To underline in all its activities that, despite major achievements in the process of decolonization, colonialism has not been completely eradicated and that the activities of the United Nations in this field should be given high priority until all of the goals of the Declaration have been achieved;

(c) To continue to disseminate information on all remaining colonial Territories under the consideration of the Special Committee, including information on military bases or facilities in any of those Territories;

(d) To disseminate more widely, particularly through parliamentary bodies, non-governmental organizations, mass media and universities, decolonization resolutions and decisions of the United Nations, including those adopted by the Special Committee, as well as other basic materials concerning decolonization and to distribute them, especially through United Nations information centres, in local languages when appropriate, in particular in those regions where there are still Non-Self-Governing Territories, and in countries that are administering Powers;

(e) To disseminate, or continue to disseminate, information in official languages of the United Nations, particularly in French, which is one of the two working languages of the Organization;

(f) To pursue its cooperation with the Pool of Non-Aligned News Agencies and to provide it on a regular basis with varied publicity material and information concerning United Nations activities in the field of decolonization;

(g) To continue to disseminate materials prepared by the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries concerning decolonization;

(h) To adopt measures aimed at providing full coverage of all activities of relevant United Nations bodies in the field of decolonization in press releases in both English and French;

(i) To continue to provide information material on decolonization through, inter alia, exhibitions to be shown outside United Nations Headquarters, to all United Nations information centres and to increase assistance to them in all related activities;

(j) To produce new visual material on problems of decolonization in cooperation with the Special Committee;

(k) To utilize materials pertaining to the participation of specialized agencies and other organizations of the United Nations system in the decolonization process, and to distribute those materials, as appropriate, through the United Nations information centres.

(4) The Special Committee requests the Department of Public Information to provide it with feedback reports from the United Nations information centres regarding their dissemination of information on decolonization and, in particular, on the activities undertaken in 1992 in relation to the celebration of the Week of Solidarity with the Peoples of All Colonial Territories, as well as Those in South Africa, Fighting for Freedom, Independence and Human Rights.

(5) The Special Committee requests the Department of Public Information to continue its efforts to ensure that information bodies provide better coverage of decolonization in all regions.

(6) The Special Committee requests the Department of Public Information, in cooperation with the Department of Political Affairs, to increase its speaking engagements at university campuses on the subject of decolonization and to inform the Subcommittee of the experience and the results achieved.

(7) The Special Committee requests the Department of Public Information and the Department of Political Affairs to continue to take into consideration the important role being played by non-governmental organizations in the decolonization process and in the dissemination of information on the situation in all the remaining colonial Territories under consideration of the Committee. The Committee requests the two Departments to continue to intensify their cooperation with non-governmental organizations in the dissemination of information on decolonization, particularly through briefings and the provision of relevant printed materials.

(8) The Special Committee appeals to the mass media to regard it as their task to contribute to the elimination of the remaining manifestations of colonialism by disseminating information on the decolonization issues and to provide support to the peoples of the colonial countries.